

Essay

on
Diagnosis

Submitted with Respect to the
— Faculty of the —

Homœopathic Medical College.

of
Pennsylvania

For Degree of Doctor of Medicine
By

A. A. Child — New-York.

 1863

Diagnosis

In choosing this subject for consideration. I have not done so with the expectation of throwing any new light upon the subject, nor saying any thing that has not already been said in favor of Diagnosis. But shall endeavor to give some of my own views, both as regards the necessity of an accurate Diagnosis. The manner in which it is to be obtained. And the difference existing between it and Symptomatology. And why we cannot

always rely upon the latter
in the treatment of disease.

And in passing it is hardly neces-
sary to mention the importance
of being able to form a clear
and accurate Diagnosis. For it
is certainly evident to almost
every Physician that unless such
is the case a great deal of
their practice will be very
unsatisfactory to themselves and
certainly it will be to those
who are employing them. We
not only owe it to ourselves and
friends but above all to our patients.

And in the commencement
let us enquire what the definition
of the word is. It is that part
of medicine whose object is
the discrimination of disease.
and a knowledge of the
pathognomonic signs of each
And certainly to be able thus
to discriminate should be
considered of the first importance
in the cure of disease. When
you are called to see a patient
for the first time you will
almost never be allowed to depart
without the patient or friends

wishing to know what the trouble is. And you will often have very intelligent ones to answer and unless you can do so scientifically it will be very embarrassing to you to say nothing about the effect it will produce upon the friends and especially upon the patient. For to the successful treatment of disease it is necessary you should have the entire confidence of the one you are treating and also of the family and how are you to expect it unless

you are proficient in your profession And you cannot be so considered. unless you are acquainted with disease. And the different signs or symptoms by which it is most ^{likely} to invade the system. And also to arrange them in form. And decide as to the nature of the disease. not because it is the name you want to treat but that you may be able to give a satisfactory answer when interrogated. and also know what you are trying to cure. And next let us enquire how

it is to be obtained. And what
is requisite in order to enable
the Physician to discriminate cor-
rectly. First he should perfectly
understand the structure, function,
and location of all the different
organs of which the human sys-
tem is composed. Also their
mutual and harmonious actions
when in a state of health.
Through the nervous system there
is an intimate connection of
all the different organs of the
body. And when one is the
subject of disease some of the

Other organs are liable to become involved through the Sympathetic system. And unless he understands his business he will often be led astray. After he understands their healthy action then he can very readily detect any departure from the normal standard, Then in order to be able to discriminate between different diseases he must understand the different signs & symptoms by which a particular disease can be recognised. Every disease has a class of symptoms peculiar

to itself, which are denominated
diagnostic, by which we decide
as to the character of the disease.
And then by the complications
the particular type. Thus in
fever we have a group of symptoms
which when they are present we
designate as febrile symptoms
such as pain in the head loss of
appetite hot and dry skin coated
tongue accelerated pulse urine
scanty and high colored. Then
we look for the complications
which are to designate the
particular type or class to which

it belongs. Thus if the abdominal
=als symptoms are most marked
and especially if the intestinal
canal and the glands within
the canal seem to suffer the
most we denominate it Typhoid
or if the Lungs are the seat
of the inflammation we should
decide it was Pneumonia. And
again if we have the febrile
symptoms with some eruption
of the integument the charac-
=ter of which together with
other complications we would
decide what type of the

Exanthemata it belonged.

Symptoms are the language of disease. or any change perceptible to the senses in any organ or function which is connected with morbid influence. And it is by the aggregate and succession of symptoms that a disease is detected. Formerly symptoms and signs were used synonymously but at the present day the former is applied to a functional or vital phenomenon of disease and the latter to that which is more directly physical.

After the Physician thoroughly understands the normal relations of the organs to each other, then he must take an aggregation of all the symptoms and from it obtain his Diagnosis, he must not only take the symptoms that are present at the time but take into consideration the patient's past life also his present surroundings and every thing that can in any way bear upon the disease for in very many chronic cases the cause lies far back, and may influence the Diagnosis.

very material. And next let us
inquire what is Symptomatology
it is that branch of pathology
The object of which is the
Knowledge of Symptoms,
And such Knowledge is truly
very important to us of the
Homoeopathic School for by such
we administer our remedial
agents. And for which we are
often held in derision by our
Allopathic friends. And it is
a Knowledge that every Student
of Homoeopathy should strive to
obtain, but in doing so he

Should not forget. That it is
equally ^{necessary} for him to be able to
discriminate between the different
diseases that he will encounter
in his professional labors.

When a Physician is called to a
patient for the first time his
first duty is (or at least should
be) to find out what ails
the patient. And his Symptomato-
logy will not of itself tell
him unless he combines with
that the power of discrimination
between different Symptoms and
disease. And after he has ~~that~~

thus made out a clear and accurate
Diagnosis. then he must
refer to his Symptomatology
and administer his remedies
according to the great law
of *One Similia Similibus*.
Omnibus,

J. N. Child

James G. Gilchrist

for the
Degree of Doctor of Medicine

Phila Feb 5th 1863